

**College of Health and Human Performance
Department of Health Education & Behavior**

HSC 4950/6935 Behavioral and Environmental Determinants of Obesity

"Fatty hamburgers, sugar-laden sodas and a couch-potato lifestyle: these are the familiar villains in the crisis of obesity sweeping developed countries."

Spring 2009 **Meeting Time: M – W – F 10:40 am Room 331 Norman Hall**

Instructor: Dr. Jill Varnes, email:jvarnes@hhp.ufl.edu; phone 392-0583x1230

Office Location: Florida Gym 16 (ground floor, west side)

Office Hours: Monday, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm; Thursday, 10:00 am – 12 noon.
Other hours by appointment

Suggested Text: Oliver, Eric J., *Fat Politics*, (2006) Oxford University Press

This course is designed to explore the interactions among the range of individual/behavioral and environmental determinants of obesity. Broad objectives relate to the nature and extent of the problem; ideas for prevention and control; effective interventions to address obesity and its determinants including broad based policy development and implementation.

Objectives: Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

- 1) Provide and support a rationale related to the nature and extent of obesity as a public health concern.
- 2) Discuss the socio-cultural context of body weight.
- 3) Describe interventions for prevention and control including scientific evidence of effectiveness.
- 4) Identify the determinants of obesity most often cited in the literature.
- 5) Identify policy making strategies that may be effective in reducing population obesity levels.
- 6) Describe various theories/models of health behavior intervention and how these theories/models can be used to develop effective interventions to prevent or control obesity in the human population.

Class Structure: The general format for class will be lecture/discussion, task force activities and occasionally guest lecturers. Each task force will have 2 reports to complete over the course of the term; one report from each task force will be assigned for presentation to the class. Usually there will be some allocation of class time for task force meetings.

Class Attendance Policy: Attendance is important to your performance in meeting the requirements of the class as well as developing an excellent working relationship with your task force members. Attendance will be taken every class meeting and will play an important role in the instructor evaluation portion of your grade. Please notify the professor **in advance** if you

will be absent for a university related or professional activity; if you will miss class due to illness if at all possible, advise the professor **prior to** the class meeting by phone, email or in person.

Submission of Completed Work: All assignments must be submitted no later than the specified deadline date and time for full consideration. Unless noted, assignments are to be submitted in hard copy. Announced deadline dates and times are firm; please plan accordingly. Planning and good time management will be essential to your success in this class.

Course assignments:

Task Force Reports: Students will be assigned to a task force (group) and each task force will be provided 2 different topics to complete two reports over the course of the term. Individual members will be required to identify at a minimum 4 different current (2000 and later) articles related to the assigned topic. Online journals are acceptable; other online sources may be used, but should not be the only source. All members are responsible for ensuring that articles are not duplicated within the task force.

Individual opinion statements: You are to develop a summary paragraph and opinion statement related to your selected articles (minimum 4) on the assigned task force topics. Organize the submission with your name, and the date in the upper right hand corner of the paper. Use as a title the task force topic as provided by the professor.

Cite the article using the American Psychological Association format, and under the citation, include your summary and opinion of the article's relevance to the task force report. Deadline dates for submission will be topic 1: Jan 23; topic 2: Mar 6.

Using information from the individual articles and opinion statements as a basis for discussion each task force will meet to identify elements to be included in the final task force report or to determine if additional research is needed prior to completing the report. The goal of the discussion is to get ideas on the table and to encourage critical thinking and analysis related to the information gathered.

Task force reports: Using research from the opinion papers, information from the text and task force discussions, the task force will develop its report including appropriate recommendations. Generally the report would be 6 to 8 pages in length excluding title page, reference list and appendices (if any). Deadline dates for submission will be Topic 1: Feb 9; Topic 2: Mar 27.

The task force report should be organized as follows:

- Title page in APA format including names of task force members and topic as the title
- Introduction including the problem statement/topic (1 – 2 pages);
- research/information from the opinion papers and/or text (3 – 4 pages);
- task force conclusions and recommendations (1 – 2 pages).

Task force presentations will be selected from the developed task force reports. Each undergraduate task force will present **one** of their reports; graduate task force(s) will present **two** task force reports. Dates will be announced in advance.

Exams: You will have two exams during the term; both will be essay exams. Exam 1 will be on Feb 25 during the regularly scheduled class time. The comprehensive final exam will be on Thursday, April 30 (exam week) and is scheduled for 7:30 – 9:30 am.

EVALUATION

		Grading Scale (percent minimum)
Task force (TF) reports	30%	A = 92 %
TF opinion papers	20%	B+ = 90 %
Task force presentation	10%	B = 82 %
Exam 1	10%	C+ = 80 %
Final Exam	15%	C = 72 %
Other assignments	5%	D+ = 70%
TF member & self eval	5%	D = 60%
<u>Instructor evaluation</u>	5%	E = LESS THAN 59%
Total	100%	

Academic Honesty: Every student that is admitted to the University of Florida has signed a statement of academic honesty committing him/her to be honest in all academic work and understanding that failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action.

This statement is a reminder to uphold your obligation as a student at the University of Florida and to be honest in all work submitted and exams taken in this class and all others.

To ensure that we have a really great class some things to remember --

All transactions and relationships are enriched by courtesy:

Be considerate of one another during group work, all ideas have merit.

Be considerate of your classmates and the professor during lectures by being

attentive, power-off cell phones or pagers and come prepared

to fully participate in each class.

Laptops may not be used during lectures.

Tentative Course Outline

- I. Overview of obesity as a public health concern
 - a. Definitions – basic epidemiology
 - b. Is obesity an epidemic?
 - c. Etiology
 - d. Incidence

- II. Sociocultural factors
 - a. Family
 - b. Eating disorders
 - c. Ethnicity, religion, geography

- d. Socio economic factors
 - e. Food industry
 - f. What we really eat
 - g. Socialization and weight
- III. Weight and health
- a. Heart disease
 - b. Diabetes
 - c. Some cancers
 - d. Sleep apnea and more
 - e. Fad diets
 - f. Why diets fail
- IV. Treatment options
- a. Behavioral
 - b. Pharmacological
 - c. Surgical
- V. Behavioral theories, health and obesity
- a. Health Belief Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, and others
 - b. Transtheoretical stages of change
 - c. Socio-Ecological Theory

Critical Dates

Jan 9	No class meeting – complete obesity news assignment
Jan 12	Assign to task force and provide topic 1
Jan 19	Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday
Jan 23	Individual opinion statements on topic 1 deadline, submit in class
Feb 2	Task Force meeting date, no class meeting
Feb 9	Task force report on topic 1 deadline, submit in class
Feb 16	Presentation planning, class will not meet
Feb 23	Assign task force topic 2
Feb 25	Exam 1 – all material to date
Mar 6	Individual opinion statements topic 2 deadline, submit to office prior to 1:00pm
	Task force meeting date, no class meeting
Mar 7	Spring Break, March 7 – 14, classes do not meet
Mar 27	Task force report on topic 2 deadline; submit in class
Apr 3	Presentation planning, class will not meet
Apr 22	Review for final exam
Apr 30	Comprehensive Final Exam, 7:30 – 9:30 AM (exam week)

Professional meeting opportunities:
 AAHPERD/AAHE – April 1 – 4, 2009 – Tampa, FL